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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DECAVALCANTE FAMILY ASSOCIATE SENTENCED**  
**TO LIFE FOR MURDER AND RACKETEERING CONVICTION**

JAMES B. COMEY, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that JOSEPH BRIDSON, an associate of the Decavalcante Organized Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra, was sentenced to life in prison for his role in a variety of racketeering and related charges. BRIDSON was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge MICHAEL B. MUKASEY.

The principal charges involved the January 23, 1998, murder of Joseph Conigliaro. BRIDSON, along with four co-defendants, including MICHAEL SILVESTRI, a New York City Police Detective and BRIDSON's cousin, was convicted after trial in December 2002.

At trial, BRIDSON and MARTIN LEWIS were convicted of participating in the murder itself, with the evidence at trial proving BRIDSON loaded the murder weapon and gave it to LEWIS, who then shot and killed Conigliaro. The jury also convicted Detective SILVESTRI and RUBEN MALAVE of being accessories after-

the-fact to the murder. Another conspirator involved in the murder, AMERICO MASSA, a/k/a "Mike Massa," began the trial as a co-defendant but entered a plea of guilty to racketeering and murder conspiracy charges after the jury was selected. On March 25, 2003, MASSA was sentenced to 35 years in prison by Judge MUKASEY.

BRIDESON was convicted of seven separate counts, including two counts under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization ("RICO") statutes, two counts of loan sharking, two counts under the Violent Crime in Aid of Racketeering ("VICAR") statute, and one count of using a gun in a crime of violence. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on the VICAR murder counts.

The testimony at trial established that the murder of Conigliaro was instigated by MASSA and BRIDESON, but authorized by higher-ranking members of the Decavalcante Family. After Conigliaro gave LEWIS a ride home, LEWIS got out of Conigliaro's car and fired five bullets into Conigliaro from a silencer-equipped .25 caliber pistol that had been supplied to him by BRIDESON and MASSA. Although hit repeatedly, Conigliaro managed to drive himself to the hospital. According to the testimony at trial, BRIDESON enlisted the assistance of his cousin MICHAEL SILVESTRI -- who was one of the NYPD Detectives assigned to the case -- to remove shell casings left in Conigliaro's car after the shooting, because BRIDESON feared that his fingerprints were

on the casings. The evidence at trial also showed that MALAVE hid LEWIS in his basement after the shooting. Consequently, SILVESTRI and MALAVE were both convicted of being an accessory-after-the-fact to murder.

Judge MUKASEY scheduled May 9, 2003 for sentencing of the remaining defendants. LEWIS also faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release. SILVESTRI and MALAVE face 15 years imprisonment for helping BRIDSON and LEWIS after the murder.

Assistant United States Attorneys JOHN M. HILLEBRECHT, DANI R. JAMES, and MICHAEL G. McGOVERN are in charge of the prosecution.

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